Our voyage: Welcome aboard! We will explore the immense history of Earth, its rocks, and the living things that have evolved on it. Our "voyage" is a series of visits to 28 distant and exotic ports of call: at each we will travel further back in time and along the branches of the evolutionary Tree of Life leading from our species to the origin of life. We'll talk about the human history and culture at each port, but the emphasis will be on the geology and evolution that have shaped our planet and its life over 4.5 billion years.

Officers: Your captain is Eric Gaidos. He can be reached at gaidos@hawaii.edu or 956-7897

Grades: 80% of the grade will be based on two equally weighted tests covering the first 14 and second 14 lectures, respectively. The second test is not cumulative (and not a "final" exam). 20% of the grade will be based on on-line open-note quizzes. Grades are not on a curve: 90+% = A, 80+% = B, 70+% = C, etc.

Lectures: 75-minute lectures begin promptly at 10:30 AM each Tuesday and Thursday in POST 723 except for university holidays and times when the captain is ashore. If you are late, please enter quietly out of respect for your fellow students. Questions are welcome. Please switch off or silence phones, pagers, music players and other electronic noisemakers.

Exams: Timed (75 minute) closed-note exams will be held at 10:30 AM in POST 723 on Tuesday March 1 and Thursday April 28. Each exams will consist of 70 multiple-choice or short-answer questions. There is no final exam during exam period.

Absences and missed work: Make-up exams will be scheduled only in the case of a medical appointment or family emergency with appropriate documentation (i.e. a doctor's note). There is no make-up for missed quizzes and there is no extra credit work.

Textbook: No textbook is required. Contact me if you would like recommendations for one.

Laulima: This course relies heavily on the University's "Learning and Collaboration Server" so you need to know how to enter and navigate it: https://laulima.hawaii.edu/portal

Online lectures: The lecture slides containing some notes are available on Laulima as PDFs, and an MPEG-format audio recording of the lecture will accompany each lecture. Slides with the words ALL HANDS in the upper right-hand corner contain material that may be covered by the quiz questions and therefore may be on one of the quizzes or exams.

Reading questions: For each lecture there is a corresponding quiz consisting of 10 multiple choice reading questions. These are all available at the beginning of the course on Laulima. Quizzes 1-14 are due at 9 AM on Tuesday March 1 and quizzes 15-28 are due at 9 AM on Thursday April 28, i.e. when the exams begin. Late quizzes will not be accepted or receive any credit. Every one of the questions on the two in-class exams will be a version (multiple choice or short answer) of a question on one of these quizzes, so it is in your best interest to complete them!